

**Subject:** RE: campaign finance story

**Date:** Friday, October 12, 2012 2:54:02 PM Eastern Daylight Time

**From:** Adam Fetcher

**To:** Justin Elliott

Hi Justin,

For your background, I'm including a rundown below of key statements by the President on campaign finance, including specifically the issues you mentioned. I am also attaching a document outlining Romney's disastrous record on campaign finance.

With regards to the constitutional amendment in response to Citizens United, the President's statement in the Reddit chat is pretty clear. On background, the President supports steps to curb the influence of money in politics. He has specifically said he supports legislation to prevent lobbyists from bundling and to prevent bundlers from lobbying, and that he supports the DISCLOSE Act. He has been clear that he also supports exploring a constitutional amendment.

#### PRESIDENT OBAMA OPPOSES UNLIMITED SPECIAL INTERESTS SPENDING

**President Obama Said He Ran For Office Because "The Voices Of Ordinary Americans Were Being Drowned Out By The Clamor Of A Privileged Few," A Problem Increased By The Citizens United Decision Allowing Unlimited Special Interests Spending.** "That's one of the reasons I ran for President: because I believe so strongly that the voices of ordinary Americans were being drowned out by the clamor of a privileged few in Washington. And that's why, since the day I took office, my administration has been taking steps to reform the system. Recently, however, the Supreme Court issued a decision that overturned decades of law and precedent – dealing a huge blow to our efforts to rein in this undue influence. In short, this decision gives corporations and other special interests the power to spend unlimited amounts of money – literally millions of dollars – to affect elections throughout our country." [Weekly Address, [5/1/10](#)]

- **President Obama: A System Of Unlimited Campaign Contributions "Runs The Risk Of Selling Out Our Democracy To The Highest Bidder."** "Inequality also distorts our democracy. It gives an outsized voice to the few who can afford high-priced lobbyists and unlimited campaign contributions, and it runs the risk of selling out our democracy to the highest bidder. (Applause.) It leaves everyone else rightly suspicious that the system in Washington is rigged against them, that our elected representatives aren't looking out for the interests of most Americans." [Remarks on the Economy in Osawatomie, [12/6/11](#)]
- **President Obama: The Other Side Was Betting "Every Single \$10 Million Check From A Wealthy Donor Drowns Out Millions Of Voices At The Ballot Box."** THE PRESIDENT: See, look -- no, no, listen, they know their economic plan isn't popular. They know that gutting investments in education and science and infrastructure, and voucherizing Medicare, they know that doesn't really sell well. They know that it especially doesn't sell well when you're doing all those things not to reduce the deficit but to pay for massive new tax cuts for millionaires and billionaires. They know that's not going to poll well. So they're betting on the fact that you get so discouraged that you decide your vote doesn't matter. They're betting every single \$10 million check from a wealthy donor drowns out millions of voices at the ballot box. [Remarks in Columbus, [8/21/12](#)]

**April 2011: Carney Said President Obama's Position On Disclosing Donors Remained The Same, Despite Undisclosed Fundraising By Priorities USA.** Q The Priorities USA fundraising group seems to be doing the same thing the President has long opposed by raising unlimited secret donations. Why is the White House allowing them to do this? MR. CARNEY: Well, first of all, we're not -- I read those reports. We don't allow outside groups one way or the other to do what they do in terms of campaign activity. And obviously we don't control outside groups. But the President's position on disclosure is the same today as it has always been. Q A former White House spokesman is leading the group. I mean, there's obviously some -- MR. CARNEY: I read that story, too, but again, we can't -- these are not people working for the administration and we can't control their activity. The President's position on disclosure remains the same. He believes it's vitally important. Q So he disapproves of -- MR. CARNEY: I'm not going to characterize it except that the President's position on disclosure remains the same.

[White House Press Briefing, [4/29/11](#)]

PRESIDENT OBAMA HAS CALLED FOR REFORM TO END THE CORROSIVE INFLUENCE OF MONEY IN POLITICS AND SUPPORT THE DISCLOSE ACT

**President Obama Called For Serious Consideration Of “Mobilizing A Constitutional Amendment Process To Overturn Citizens United.”** “In a chat with the website Reddit, President Obama called for serious look at a constitutional amendment to reverse the Supreme Court’s Citizens United ruling. ‘Over the longer term, I think we need to seriously consider mobilizing a constitutional amendment process to overturn Citizens United (assuming the Supreme Court doesn’t revisit it). Even if the amendment process falls short, it can shine a spotlight of the super-PAC phenomenon and help apply pressure for change,’ Obama wrote.” [Politico, [8/29/12](#)]

**In 2012 State Of The Union, President Obama Called For Campaign Finance Reform To End The Corrosive Influence Of Money In Politics, Including Barring Bundlers From Lobbying Congress.** “Some of this has to do with the corrosive influence of money in politics. So together, let’s take some steps to fix that. Send me a bill that bans insider trading by members of Congress; I will sign it tomorrow. (Applause.) Let’s limit any elected official from owning stocks in industries they impact. Let’s make sure people who bundle campaign contributions for Congress can’t lobby Congress, and vice versa -- an idea that has bipartisan support, at least outside of Washington.” [State of the Union, [1/24/12](#)]

**The Obama Administration Released A Statement Of Administration Policy, Announcing That It “Strongly Supports” The DISCLOSE Act To Ensure Transparency And Accountability In Elections.** “The Administration strongly supports Senate passage of S. 3369. The DISCLOSE Act is a necessary measure to ensure transparency and accountability and to equip Americans with the tools to know who is attempting to influence the Nation’s elections.” [Statement of Administration Policy, [7/16/12](#)]

**President Obama Said The Consequences Of Citizens United Would Be Unprecedented Influence Over Politicians By Special Interests.** “Two years ago, the Supreme Court ruled in Citizens United that big corporations are allowed to spend unlimited amounts of money to influence American elections. They can buy millions of dollars’ worth of TV ads with no obligation to reveal who’s actually paying for them. The consequences of this decision are predictable. If we allow this practice to continue, special interests will have unprecedented influence over politicians. It’s wrong. It’s corrosive to our democracy, and it’s a threat to our future.” [Statement on the DISCLOSE Act, [7/16/12](#)]

• **President Obama: By Blocking The DISCLOSE Act, Republicans Were Standing With Big Banks And Oil Companies Instead Of The American People.** “Today, Republicans in the Senate had the chance to change it. They had the opportunity to support a bill that would prevent the worst effects of the Citizens United decision and require groups or special interests who are trying to influence elections to reveal their donors so the public will know who’s funding their political ads. This bill should have received broad, bipartisan support. Unfortunately, Republicans chose to block it. Instead of standing up for the American people, Republicans stood with big banks and oil companies – special interests that certainly don’t need more clout in Washington. I will continue to do everything I can to repair the deficit of trust between Washington and the American people. I’m disappointed Republicans in Congress failed to take action and hold corporations and special interests accountable to the American people.” [Statement on the DISCLOSE Act, [7/16/12](#)]

**President Obama Called On Congress To Pass The DISCLOSE Act So American Voters Wouldn’t Be Drowned Out By Millions In Secret, Special Interest Advertising.** “At a time of such challenge for America, we can’t afford these political games. Millions of Americans are struggling to get by, and their voices shouldn’t be drowned out by millions of dollars in secret, special interest advertising. The American people’s voices should be heard. A vote to oppose these reforms is nothing less than a vote to allow corporate and special interest takeovers of our elections. It is damaging to our democracy...We’ve got a similar opportunity to prevent special interests from gaining even more clout in Washington. This should not be a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. This is an issue that goes to whether or not we’re going to have a government that works for ordinary Americans; a government of, by and for the people.” [Remarks on the DISCLOSE Act, [7/26/10](#)]

**President Obama Called The Republican Blocking Of The DISCLOSE Act Brought Special Interests Closer To Taking Congress Back And Returning To The Days When Lobbyists Wrote The Laws.** “Today’s decision by a partisan minority to block this legislation is a victory for special interests and U.S. corporations – including

foreign-controlled ones – who are now allowed to spend unlimited money to fill our airwaves, mailboxes and phone lines right up until Election Day. And it comes at the expense of the American people, who no longer have the right to know who is financing these ads in an attempt to influence an election for their preferred candidate. Wall Street, the insurance lobby, oil companies and other special interests are now one step closer to taking Congress back and returning to the days when lobbyists wrote the laws.” [Statement On Senate Disclose Act Vote, [9/23/10](#)]

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**From:** Justin Elliott [<mailto:Justin.Elliott@propublica.org>]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 12, 2012 12:52 PM  
**To:** Adam Fetcher  
**Subject:** Re: campaign finance story

Thanks

On Oct 12, 2012, at 1:44 PM, "Adam Fetcher" <[AFetcher@barackobama.com](mailto:AFetcher@barackobama.com)> wrote:

Hey Justin, I am getting back to you today on this – sorry for the delay.

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**From:** Justin Elliott [<mailto:Justin.Elliott@propublica.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 10, 2012 1:50 PM  
**To:** Adam Fetcher  
**Subject:** campaign finance story

Hey Adam --

Ben told me to direct questions your way. I'm doing a piece for ProPublica looking at Obama v. Romney positions on campaign finance.  
A few questions for you:

--what would Obama do specifically in a 2nd term on campaign finance in terms of legislation and executive orders?

--does he support the DISCLOSE Act in Congress right now?

--does he support Dick Durbin's Fair Elections Now Act?

--There were reports last year of a draft executive order requiring some kind of campaign finance disclosure by government contractors — anything like that on the table now?

--In general is there any position paper or anything else I should know about his positions on campaign finance?

I'm at (917) 512-0223 if you want to chat ...

Best,  
Justin

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